The Plague

in

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One of the Boston papers, commenting upon Father Osborne's reproof of Dr. Donald's great errour, found an amusing side to the incident. Those who believe the doctrine of the Gospel cannot find anything of the sort. To them it is all very black and horrible. There are Church troubles and differences in which amusement may be found. There are cases which it is allowable to treat with a lightness of humor that does not transgress charity or reverence. Often the subject matter in dispute is near the surface of things and does not involve the Sacred Being of God or His Revelation of Himself to men. Canons and rubrics, and even some of the minor questions of theology need not always be dealt with in the same humble prostration of the soul before the Divine Majesty that must necessarily go with the consideration of the great fundamental facts of the Faith. When we see a mistake or even a careless violation of the evanescent law of the Church about external matters we are not filled with horrour as we are when we encounter a vital errour in religion.

Therefore the Fond du Lac matter, which some journals on the other side have taken so seriously, does not even from their point of view

call for the same solemnity of treatment as the great profanation in Massachusetts. And yet those same journals, the *Church Standard* and the *Churchman*, have used their heavy artillery (the heaviest they could bring up) in the former case, treating a question of ceremonial with a solemnity and profuseness, (we cannot say profoundness) quite out of proportion to its importance, and have passed by the execrable thing that was done in Boston with few words. They have contented themselves with saying that Dr. Donald violated no canon or rubric, but that they cannot approve what he did. Why are they so silent in the one case, and so vociferous in the other?

Before going any further let us say that we shall not think of attributing unworthy motives or insincerity to anybody, although we are sorry to see that the *Church Standard* persists in doing so in the case of the Bishop of Fond du Lac. We shall not say that the *Churchman* and the *Church Standard* have been actuated by merely partisan motives. We will not say or think that Dr. Donald, in admitting the Unitarian minister to hold his heretical service in Trinity Church, was insincere, or thought that he was doing anything wrong. We shall not say that anyone of the Unitarians is insincere, or careless as to the truth when he refuses to confess that Jesus Christ is Very God of One Substance with the Father. We do not know, and we are not expected to know the heart of any of these men. We do know that there is such a thing as invin-

cible ignorance, and that well meaning men, like Saul of Tarsus, may hold damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. But their invincible ignorance does not make their heresy any the less damnable, nor excuse us from the duty of denouncing it and contending against it.

Especially are we held to this duty when the priesthood of the Church is desecrated by one of its members consenting to the open denial of our Lord's coequal Godhead and the truth of the Holy Trinity, and when a church consecrated to the worship of Almighty God, and to that end set apart from all conflicting uses, is willingly given up to blasphemy against His Holy Name. Every Christian is held to this duty, in his sphere, by virtue of his baptism in the Name of the Blessed Trinity; and we are glad to note that some of the nonconformist brethren of Boston openly expressed their agreement and sympathy with Father Osborne in his faithful words. We are correspondingly grieved by the fact that some of our own clergy have, with like openness, arrayed themselves with the blasphemers.

It has been said, even by many who do not approve of Dr. Donald's action, that he violated no law of the Church, meaning no rubric or canon. We expect to show presently that this is a great mistake. But suppose for a moment that this is true, what then? If he had given orders for the assassination of his bishop would he have violated any canon or rubric? There is not

one that deals with the subject. If he had given such orders supposing that he was doing God service, like Saul of Tarsus, would his sincerity have made his act one becoming a clergyman of this Church? Should he be allowed quietly to go on in his priesthood and rectory? How much less when he has given orders that the Divinity of our Lord should be openly denied in his church. The life of a bishop is of no importance in comparison to that. We are not exaggerating the matter in the very least. The Unitarian minister *stands for* the denial of our Lord's Divinity. He used a book which purports to be the Prayer Book *with the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity thoroughly taken out of it.* And he appeared for the purpose of performing a service and offering prayers to a god who is not our God, but an invention of the Unitarians, and the temple of our God was given up to him that he might do so. Solomon did not go so far as this when he made temples to Moloch and Astarte npon Mount Zion, because at least the temple of the Lord was not invaded.

The god of the Unitarians is not our God. Their religion is not only different from ours, but opposed to it, even as Nay is opposed to Yea. The papers tell us that one of the Unitarian ministers of Boston confessed this in an "interview." Rev. Charles E. St. John, secretary of the American Unitarian Association said:

Father Osborne's attitude is one that should be expected from men of his point of view. Believing as he does, I do

not see what else he could say. The world has long been familiar with his type of orthodox belief, and I daresay it will be many years yet before such methods of presenting Christianity will cease to be of use. There are still many people who understand Jesus Christ as Father Osborne does, and they are doing a great deal of good in the world. If, in the course of it, they see fit to denounce Unitarians, we are peacefully willing to be denounced. *Boston Transcript, Jan. 1.*

This witness is true in its implication that the Unitarian religion is utterly foreign to Christianity as we have received it. Therefore it must be a monstrous lie against God. We do not denounce Unitarians, as persons. We are profoundly sorry that they are under the power of the monstrous lie; because, although Christ died for them, that lie keeps them away from Him and from the course of life in which they would find salvation and health in Him. We are bound, just so far as we can, to attack and try to put down their false god. But Dr. Donald deliberately causes him to be worshipped by them in Trinity Church.

We are tempted to use violent words and to imitate the thunders of the prophets. But they were inspired and we are not. And we doubt whether any words have vigour enough to make the matter appear worse than the bald statement of the facts makes it appear. With Father Osborne, and the faithful generally, we are amazed and confounded and utterly abased by this blasphemy. We have seen the abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place. We

flee into the mountains of prayer and humiliation. We shall have a special thing to grieve over during the coming Lent. We shall not dare to come down from any housetop of devotion to which the Spirit has led us that we may take any earthly thing from the lower part of our house. If we have our hands on the plow in the field we shall not turn back for any matter of clothes. We must redouble all our prayers and efforts. We hope none of our brethren who believe in Jesus Christ as God will be willing to spend any more time over episcopal garb or little bits of texts and hymns "interpolated," mint, anise and cummin, but that we shall with one accord join in intercession to God to deliver us from this plague.

It is nothing less than a pestilence in the Church that there should be not one, but many priests who are ready to deliver our churches to Unitarians and to maintain that it makes no difference whether or not men adore our Lord and attribute their salvation to Him Who died for them. Under these circumstances, whether any canon was violated or not, we dare not be indifferent. Not only ought we to pray in our hearts against this evil, but to come out and do something demonstrative. How many will join in keeping a day of humiliation and expiation to Almighty God for this outrage upon His Divine Majesty? In a sense we are all guilty. We have not been as zealous as we ought to be, either in confessing the truth or in driving away heresy.

If one member suffer, all the others suffer with it. Will any bishop or bishops take the lead in a solemn call to united reparation and supplication? "O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance: Thy holy temple have they defiled." St. Matthias's day is the first Sunday in Lent. What if we should unite in this special intention on that day, that the Church may be alway preserved from false apostles and ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors?

Perhaps there is more that we can do. If it is true that there is no law by which Dr. Donald can be tried and disciplined—or, if the Bishop of Massachusetts will do nothing, and there is no law by which he can be tried for failure to perform his episcopal duty, then this Church needs legislation very badly. We cannot see how any one can think Dr. Donald has violated no law, that is to say no written law. We cannot see why there would be any difficulty in preparing a presentment against him, with several counts each of which would be sufficient to convict him. He has violated his Ordination Vows; he has broken Title I, canon 24, section 1; and he has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a Clergyman of this Church. If we are correctly informed as to the facts of this scandal, he is certainly guilty of the second, third, fifth and sixth of the "Offences for which Ministers may be Tried and Punished." Probably he is also guilty of the fourth, that is to say "Violation of the Constitution or Canons of the Diocese to which he

belongs "; but we have not the Constitution and Canons of that diocese before us, and we cannot speak certainly.

1. He has held and taught publicly and advisedly a doctrine contrary to that held by the Protestant Episcopal Church. It makes no difference whether one teaches by speaking his own words, or by reading a book, or by causing another to speak in his place. Dr. Donald caused another to speak or read in his place. He knew that the sentences which were to be spoken were so constructed, or reconstructed, as necessarily to imply, under all the circumstances, that God has never revealed Himself to us as Three Persons of Whom our Lord Jesus Christ is One. Those sentences are not only contrary but contradictory to the doctrine held by this Church. If it be said that Dr. Donald, although he caused such sentences to be read in his place, yet does not hold any such false doctrine, we reply that what a man holds can only be known by what he professes. He cannot be presumed to hold that Christ is God and yet deliberately have it proclaimed that He is not.

2. He is guilty of violation of the canon of General Convention mentioned above, which says:

"Every minister shall, before all sermons and lectures, and on all other occasions of public worship, use the Book of Common Prayer, as the same is or may be established by the authority of the General Convention of this Church; and

in performing such service, no other prayers shall be used than those prescribed by the said Book."

Qui facit per alium facit per se. By the lips of the Unitarian Mr. Brown, Dr. Donald used other prayers in Trinity Church. For everything permitted by him to be done in that Church he is responsible. If anyone should do or say in that Church anything which Dr. Donald disapproved and did not permit, he could clear himself by disavowing it. This we wish he would do; but, as we are informed, he expressly approves and justifies all that was done.

3. In his Ordination Vows Dr. Donald solemnly swore to "be ready, with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word"; instead of which he openly invites teachers of heresy and blasphemers of the Holy Name by Which we are called to come into the Church and there to uphold erroneous and strange doctrine of the worst sort.

4. In addition to the offences already mentioned, it is certainly conduct unbecoming a Clergyman of this Church to turn over a building which has been solemnly consecrated to the worship of Almighty God, and thereto set apart "from all unhallowed, ordinary and common use," to the unhallowed use of conducting Unitarian services therein. It is unbecoming a Clergyman of this Church deliberately to allow God the Son to be ignored in His own House, and that by those whose settled habit has been

to ignore Him for generations. It would have been unbecoming for a Clergyman of this Church even to have been present on such an occasion; how much more to have invited it. It has been intimated that if Mr. Brown had only had a lay reader's license from the Bishop of Massachusetts there would have been no irregularity; but the Bishop could not have given him such a license without violating the canon on the subject, because Mr. Brown is not a communicant; nor could any licensed lay reader use the King's Chapel book in conducting a funeral service. Because of these canonical provisions, as well as because of the consecration of the church, Dr. Donald was guilty of conduct most unbecoming a clergymen.

Can he not then be presented and tried? Most certainly he can; and it is our opinion that if Manton Eastburn were still Bishop of Massachusetts it would not be long before the trial began. Suppose a clergyman of this Church were to offer his Church to a Jesuit father to say a mass there. In that mass the invited priest would offend against the truth by praying for the Pope as the head of the Church Catholic in a sense that would imply that this Church is not a Church. The attitude of the Roman obedience towards our holy mother is such that the clergyman who had invited the Jesuit would have committed an outrage. He would be cited to appear before an ecclesiastical court and put upon his trial very promptly. He would be found guilty

of having broken his Ordination Vows, and the canon above mentioned, and of conduct unbecoming a clergyman. The finding would be just. A paper tells us that at Fond du Lac some one wished that Bishop Koslowski, a Roman bishop *who had broken with the Pope*, should silently join in the laying on of hands upon Bishop Weller, but that there were bishops present who forbade it. They did well to forbid it. Those same bishops would certainly discipline a priest who should offer his church to a Roman priest. Nevertheless the offence would be light as compared with the offence of Dr. Donald, because whatever else the Roman priest might do, he would at least worship our God. With *latria* he would bow down before Jesus Christ as the Eternal Word, and, with full power, he would offer the Memorial He commanded us to offer. His prayers would be to the Triune God of Christendom. His fault would lie in his denial of a true branch of the Church. There would be neither desecration nor blasphemy, except that falsehood includes both in some degree. There would be no neo-paganism, no worshipping of a god made by the imagination of men.

Let it not be forgotten that we are far nearer to Rome, if we are faithful to the doctrine of Christ as this Church hath received it, than we can ever be to Unitarianism. A thoroughly Protestant Evangelical bishop, now dead, once said, "I prefer the extreme of Romanism to this Broad Church. The Romanists have the Faith, but they overlay

it. The Broad Church haven't got it." Praise be to God for all such utterances in these evil times. But utterances are not enough. Action ought to be taken. It will not always do for those who believe to rest content with speaking often one to another or with bearing verbal testimony. There are solemn duties beyond that. The members of the Diocese of Massachusetts know what are the proceedings canonically required to institute a trial of Dr. Donald. They may think that the Bishop will quash such proceedings, but we think it is nevertheless their duty to begin them. The matter need not stop with the diocesan court. A bishop can be tried for offences named under six heads in the canon; Title II, canon 9. In such a case as we have supposed the bishop would be guilty of at least 5 and 6 of the offences enumerated. If they need help in the presentment from other dioceses three male communicants of the Diocese of Massachusetts will be enough, with four from outside, two of the whole number being priests.

We have no desire to stir up strife. We have a full sense of the evils and scandals that accompany an ecclesiastical trial. It may be that in this particular case we are ignorant of controlling or modifying circumstances. But we cannot help thinking that when the Name and honour of our Lord are daringly outraged in our very midst we ought not to lie down under it. There has been too much weeping and wringing of hands—not enough of resort to the remedies

which God's Providence has supplied to us. We believe that a firm stand for our Lord Christ would be rewarded, and, if he saw fit, would result in a purification of the Church from Arianism at least.

Let us not be afraid of losing numbers or talent in this cause. Probably we should stand to lose both; but they are worse than worthless to us, they are positively infectious as things now are. Let us not be too eager to retain our hold even upon the costly building on Copley Square; for now it is desecrated, it is a plague spot. Our Lord is worth more to us than all the rest, and we are in danger of losing Him if we do not use every means open to us to put away heresy from among us. Let us not be afraid of a new Reformed Episcopal schism. It may be the best thing that could happen, especially if it should be upon the issue of our Lord's Divinity. Let the Unitarians, let all who are not out and out Trinitarians of the ancient and imperishable pattern, go to the Unitarians. That denomination is comprehensive enough to receive them all. They are living a lie in the Church, however good their intentions may be. When they find themselves in a more consistent position they will, we shall hope, be able to see the truth, and then we shall welcome them back as *ex animo* Christians.

But whatever comes to pass or does not come to pass, we trust that no genuine member of this Church will lose heart or faith. There is no

reason for that, even if the plague should seem still to rage uninterruptedly, in Massachusetts and in all the places which its virus has reached. The Lord is still with us. In His own time and way, not by our little plans, He will bring victory. Let us put our trust in His prophecy:

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, ye have sold yourselves for nought: and ye shall be redeemed without money.